JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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BUDDHIST DELEGATION TO VISIT RED CHINA

Similar in size to the recent 15 man delegation of Japanese Christian Leaders that visited churches in Communist China for a month last spring, a "good will mission" of 17 from the all Japan Buddhist Association will visit China in September, at the invitation of the Buddhist Association of Communist China.

JAPAN'S BLIND CHRISTIANS HOLD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Under auspices of the NCC's Committee on Evangelism for the Blind, some 200 representatives of blind Christians throughout Japan gathered at Koganei where they discussed the anti-nuclear bomb movement, securing of employment for the blind and the translation of hymns into Braille. The conference also adopted a resolution asking that the rather derogatory word "mekura" (blind man) be discarded in speaking of those who cannot see, including an appeal to the Japan Bible Society to eliminate its use in Scriptures concerning the blind. Sponsors who accompanied the blind delegates, such as husbands of blind women and wives of blind men received special commendation at the meeting, and a plan was inaugurated to build a home for blind women in Tokyo. There are 47 public or private schools for the blind in Japan, and a very high percentage of the teachers in these schools are already baptized or are studying to become Christians.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS ISSUES PUBLICATIONS

The International Institute for the Study of Religions has begun a series of publications on religions in Japan which should prove to be both useful and informing to those interested in knowing more about religions in Japan. The first one, a directory of the Sectarian Shinto Federation and fifty-six prominent shrines throughout the country, will be followed by directories of Christianity, Buddhism and new religions. Stated for publication in December is a discussion of Shinto by Dr. Sokyo Ono of the Shinto University in Tokyo. This will be followed in 1958 by booklets on Buddhism, Christianity and the new religions. These will not be on sale. They are available only to supporting members of the Institute.

DR. SOPER'S OCTOBER ITINERARY SET

Sponsored by the NCC as another special feature of the Centenary Evangelistic Program, Dr. Donald Soper, famed street preacher & social worker of London, will conduct evangelistic meetings in strategic centers throughout Japan in October. He will be in Tokyo(3-7), Hamamatsu(8), Nagoya(9), Kyoto(10), Osaka(11-12), Kobe(13), Okayama(15), Hiroshima(17), Nagasaki(18), Kumamoto(19), Fukuoka(20-21), Yahata and Moji(22), Tokyo again (23), Sendai(24), Sapporo(27), and will depart for Britain Oct.30.

SOCIAL WORK PIONEER DIES AT 90

Mr. Takayuki Namae, 90, Pioneer of Social Work in Japan, passed away at his house in Tokyo July 31. He was born the year the Civil War ended in the United States in 1865, near Sendai. He studied at Boston University at one time in the U.S.A., and gave his entire life to helping the poor and destitute of his native land. The Japanese Government bestowed upon posthumously 2 decorations including the Cross of the order of merit more than 2000 people attended his funeral.

KAGAWA MEMORIAL PLANNED AT KOBE

At the recent annual meeting of "The Friends of Jesus", an organization of Christians closely related to Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa of Japan, it was voted to erect in Kobe, the site where Japan's most well known Christian of today first began his work, a memorial building in the form of a Social Service Center. Estimated cost is ¥30,000,000. Dr. Kagawa, known to all the world as a great Japanese Evangelist, at 68, though in poor health for many years, is still very active over a wide area, ranging from Advisor to the Socialist Party in the political realm, to such fields as evangelism and social welfare enterprises in the religious realm.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS INSTITUTE AT KARUIZAWA

The Social Problems Committee of the NCC met at Hoshino Onsen with Dr. de Vries of the WCC, recently in Japan, to discuss the overpopulation problem, poverty, large, middle, and small scale industries, and rural reformation. Considered from the standpoint of the Church's responsibility in these areas, reports of special study groups in Japan will be added to those being compiled by the World Council in countries of Southeast Asia, Africa, and S. America. The World Council will then solicit world wide cooperation in finding some solutions to the pressing needs in these fields.

UNITED CHURCH SENDING "MISSIONARIES" OVERSEAS

Two Japanese Christian "Missionaries" left recently for overseas service. The Reverends Tadashi Mitsui (26) and Nozomu Furuya (28) went as Fraternal Workers to the United Church of Canada. A third, the Rev. Motoi Munakata will go out from the United Church of Christ in Japan to serve Japanese emigrants in Sao Paulo, Brazil this fall. A fourth, the Rev. Y. Makino (31) has just been designated by the United Church as missionary pastor to Japanese emigrants, mostly from Okinawa, living in Bolivia, and will leave in November.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS CONVENTION NEXT MAY

Just preceeding the World Sunday School Convention beginning on August 6th next summer, a National Church School Teachers Conference, sponsored by the Educational Commission of the United Church has been announced for the "Golden Week" of May next year. The Centenary Movement has designated 1958 as Christian Education Year in Japan. At a recent meeting of Christian Education Committee Chairmen from the United Church's 14 districts, it was decided to approach each of the 4 regional conferences on The Mission of the Church this fall to emphasize the significance of the World Convention next year to the growth of Christianity in Japan.

SUMMER CAMP FOR POLIO VICTIMS UNDER WAY

Sponsored jointly by Japan Church World Service, the Mainichi newspaper, and the Japanese Society for Physically Disabled Children, the first summer camp of its kind in the Tokyo area is hosting 30 children between the ages of 8 and 16 in Chiba - all victims of infantile paralysis. There are twenty-six boys, and 8 fall into the "only child" category. A gift of ¥100,000 from a Church in Australia is helping to finance the camp, as is also a contribution of $200.00 from the Yokohama chapel Center. Directed by Sadao Yamada, Secretary of the National Y.M.C.A., a large staff of medical specialists is giving expert care to the campers for 9 days at the seaside.

EXCAVATED CROSS BELIEVED FROM 14TH CENTURY ROMAN POPE

At the site of the famous Hara Castle near Nagasaki, known for its connection with the period of Christian martyrdom in Japan around 1637, a golden cross was excavated 6 years ago which is now believed to have been a gift to a Japanese feudal lord direct from the Pope at Rome. Because this year is the 320th anniversary of the battle of Shimabara(in which many Christians perished), the cross has become an object of special interest. When cleaned and polished after its excavation by a farmer tilling his field, the cross was found to be of 24 karats solid gold, with the shape of the crown of the Roman Pope and a Latin Cross skillfully engraved upon it. Japanese scholars and historians, called in recently by the Mayor of Shimabara, believe that an Italian Administrative Inspector to India came on to Japan in 1591 to carry a special gift to the Prime Minister of Japan from the Vice King of India. It is believed that he brought the cross, direct from the Pope at Rome, and presented it to lord Harunobu, a Christian daimyo (feudal lord) of that time. It will be recalled that the son of lord Harunobu did not share his father's faith, and it was the son who set off the persecution after his father's death in an effort to exterminate all Christians and banish all missionaries. Christian samurai carried off the cross from Rome, hid it, and later used it secretly as a symbol of their faith. The cross is to be preserved in the tower of Hara castle, soon to be rebuilt.

"BED SCHOOLS" IN JAPAN

A new departure in education in Japan is an interesting experiment in taking the school to the bedside of those who are ill and can't go school. Children hospitalized for an extended period of time in a hospital in the small town of Tsudamachi in Fukuoka Pref. are receiving training in Mathematics, Geography, Japanese language, History, and English every day from Teachers who come to their bedsides. There are now several "bed schools" throughout Japan, and the experiment is receiving considerable commendation. On a recent radio broadcast, students of a bed school in Chiba sent pencils and note-booksto students of another bed school - a gracious and thoughtful act of communication between those in the same fellowship of pain.

JAPANESE STUDENTS BACK FROM PHILLIPPINE GOOD WILL TOUR

Reciprocating the good will tour of 4 Phillippine Youth last year in Japan, 4 Japanese students who toured the Phillippines this spring on a similar mission returned to Japan in the middle of June. Two of them had participated in a work camp sponsored by the YMCA in the Phillippines, while the other two attended an Asian Journalism Seminar. Reports of their experiences, among others, were made at Doshisha University in Kyoto, over the NHK radio network and at the Nara Lacour Evangelism Center. A spokesman for the group said, "to learn to know each other is of the greatest importance. Feelings towards Japanese on the part of the Phillippinos is improving, but everywhere we went we were told of the bad treatment received from the Japanese Army. Phillippinos live in a colonial fashion - most are Catholics, so are relatively easy to Christianize. Their nature is bright and simple. By contrast, we Japanese are too argumentative. They have many good points that we don't. We feel that the Japanese Church must become more serious about evangelism in Asia. For this purpose, more young men should go to the Phillippines in order that friendship might be expanded between the two nations."

ANOTHER BOOK BY DR. ZENTA WATANABE

One of the best known Bible scholars in Japan today, Dr. Zenta Watanabe, Pastor Emeritus of the well-known Tokyo Ginza Church, and retired Professor of Bible, has just published another of his books, entitled, "A Change of Mind", with a sub-title, "Record of My Pilgrimage Around The World in the Study of the Bible." This is a kind of autobiography, the story of a man's life that began in the "under world", that was changed and redirected by a street-corner sermon of a Salvation Army preacher, and the subsequent journey of an exceptionally keen and sensitive spirit into the realm of Christian faith.

4TH ANNUAL LAY VISITATION EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the NCC the fourth annual national training conference on Lay Visitation Evangelism was held at Hakone Aug. 6-8 with 140 Lay Visitation "Volunteers" and their Pastors attending. Centered around testimonies from Lay "Volunteers" and Pastors as to the success and problems of this method of evangelism in their own lives and in their own local churches, the Conference was chaired by the Rev. Tasaka, Pastor of Tonan Lutheran Church in Tokyo, and Chairman of the NCC's Lay Visitation Evangelism Committee.

BILLY GRAHAM INVITED TO JAPAN FOR OCTOBER 1959

A formal invitation has just been sent jointly by the National Christian Council and the Nippon Fukuin Renmei to Billy Graham to come to Japan in October 1959 as one of the highlights of the Centennial Year. Four weeks in October have been designated for nation-wide evangelistic campaigns in strategic areas throughout Japan. 10 members from the NCC and 10 from the Fukuin Domei comprise the Committee in charge of all arrangements.

BRIEFS

Visitation of the 1500 churches of the United Church by leaders from Central Headquarters was begun in May and now, 4 months later, only 15 churches remain to be visited.

A new monthly "evangelistic newspaper" called The Gospel of Christ will soon be published by the United Church of Christ & distributed to churches throughout Japan to promote the centenary evangelistic program.

Rev. Juro Yuasa, Pastor of the Sao Paulo Church in Brazil, and Chairman of the Federation of Japanese Christians in that country has just returned to his homeland after 30 years' absence. He is a brother of Dr. Hachiro Yuasa, President of International Christian University in Tokyo.

Rev. Kiyoshi Hirai, Chairman of the NCC left Japan in mid-July to attend the Central Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches at Yale University in the USA from July 30 - Aug. 8. He will report in person on Japan's preparations for the forthcoming World Sunday School Convention next year.

Mr. Soichi Saito, former General Secretary of the National YMCA has recently departed from Japan to lecture for a year at Columbia University in New York City on "Christian Youth Movements in Japan".

Dr. Alfred B. Webber, well known physician attached to the 7th Day Adventist Hospital in Ogikubo, Tokyo, has just left Japan aboard the APL Magnolia Mariner for furlough in the United States.